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FREDERIC FAIRCHILD SHERMAN

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ON AMERICAN SOIL
By HANS STOCKLEIN

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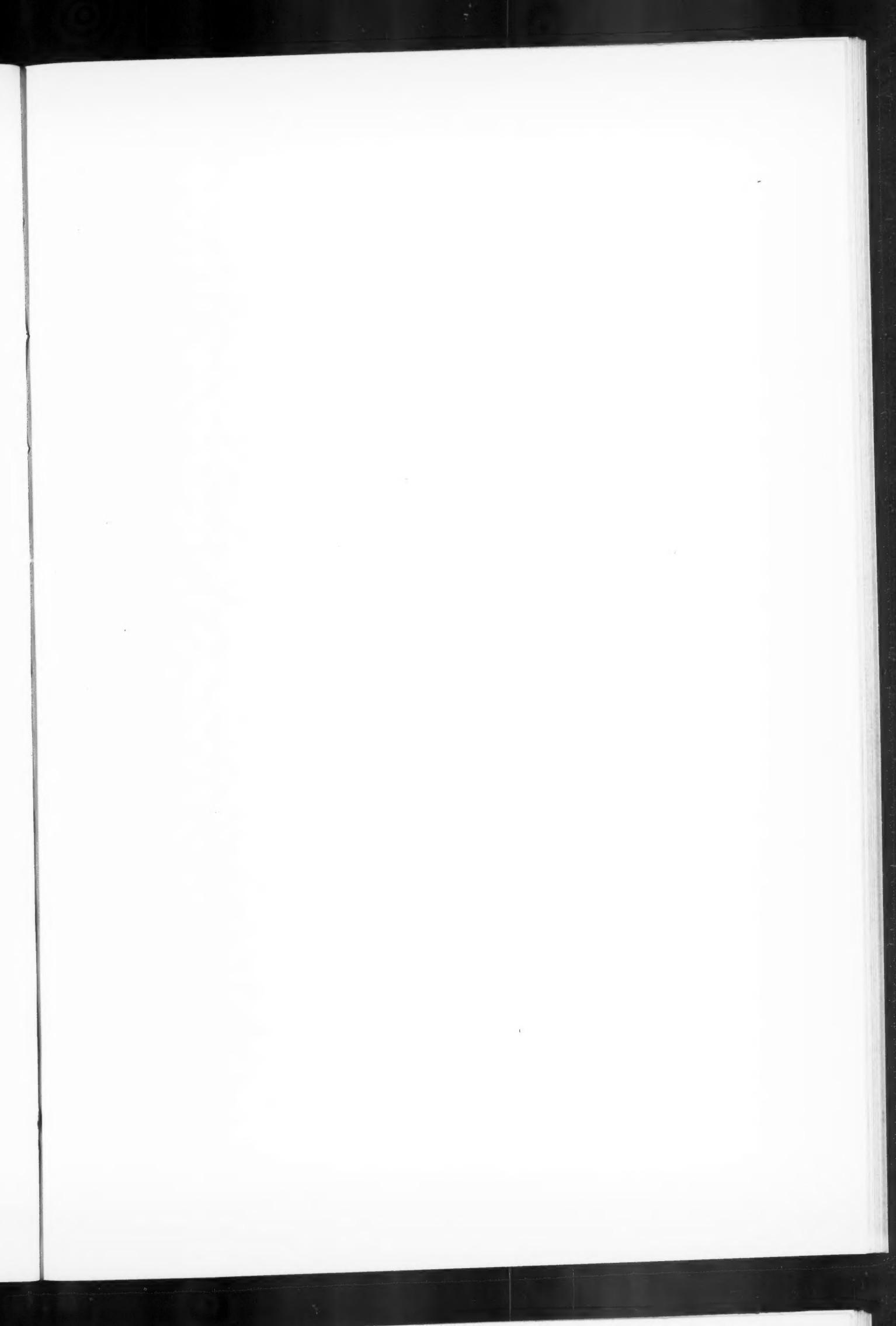
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THE KENG KUNG YU
CHINESE SACRIFICIAL VESSEL OF THE SHANG OR EARLY CHOU PERIOD
Courtesy of Dr. Otto Burchard



ART IN AMERICA AND ELSEWHERE
AN ILLUSTRATED BI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE
VOLUME XX · NUMBERS 4 & 5 · JUNE-AUGUST, 1932



THE KENG KUNG YÜ

By BENJAMIN MARCH

Detroit, Mich.

RECENTLY there has come to America a Chinese sacrificial bronze vessel of such unusual interest as to warrant special publication even though all of the questions concerning it have not yet been satisfactorily answered.

In the first place, the shape is rare. A deep bowl with a flaring rim rests upon a base wide at the foot and constricted toward the point of joining. The whole is circular in section and apparently cast in one piece. About half way up two sides of the bowl are handles, horizontally attached, which are curved upward towards the rim of the vessel. The various important dimensions are as follows: total height; 29.5 cm.; height of base, 8.5 cm.; diameter at the rim, 42.0 cm.; diameter at the foot, 28.0 cm.; thickness of the wall, from .2 to 1.0 cm.

The exploration of memory and various catalogues and reference works has resulted in the discovery of but two other examples which are immediately comparable. One of these is a somewhat smaller piece in the

(Copyright, 1932, by Frederic F. Sherman)

Palace Museum in Peiping, published as one of a series of a hundred post-cards of bronzes in the former Imperial Collection. It is labelled as of the *chiu* class, *chiu* being an ancient term preferred by Professor Jung Keng for certain vessels generally known as *tui* (see Yetts, *Eumorfopoulos Collection, Bronzes*, vol. I, p. 44.). The Keng Kung piece, however, differs from the ordinary *tui* in two very marked particulars. It is larger, and the handles are attached horizontally, as in the *p'an* (a shallow basin) or the *hsien* (a steamer for sacrificial grain, usually with a pierced bottom, like a colander), instead of vertically as is typical of the *tui* class.

A more nearly similar example, in decoration as well as form, is illustrated in the *Hsi Ch'ing Hsu Chien* (*chuan XVI, 1*) which was prepared at the end of the eighteenth century as a supplement to the *Hsi Ch'ing Ku Chien*, the catalogue of the Imperial Collection. There the vessel is labelled *yu*, and though several other rather dissimilar pieces are included in the same class, comparison of the illustration cited with the bronze under discussion, together with the desire to differentiate the latter definitely from the common and familiar *tui* type, leads us to apply unhesitatingly the name *yü*.

The title Keng Kung, or Duke Keng, is derived from the inscription in archaic ideograms cast inside the rim of the bowl midway between the handles. There are seven characters, cast intaglio as is usual with such vessels, and they read "? *tso keng kung pao tsun i*". The first of the seven is still undeciphered, and its duplicate has not yet been found by the writer in the inscription of any other bronze. One Chinese scholar offered the reading *wei* (Giles, 12,594) or *wei* (Giles, 12,596) as a possible interpretation. These two characters are both common in bronze inscriptions, but do not conform to the ideogram of the present writing in either form or intent. Both of the *wei* characters are typically used as initial particles and introductory to dates; while here we have no date, and a proper name is more evidently called for. The last three characters, *pao tsun i*, compose a common formula. Their intention is probably best rendered by the paraphrase "to be treasured as a sacrificial vessel". So we may read the inscription as "—— made (for, or in memory of) Keng Kung, to be treasured as a sacrificial vessel." An equally acceptable variant would be, "——made (for, or in memory of) Keng Kung, (this) precious sacrificial vessel." Who Keng Kung or Duke Keng may have been is not at present clear. The complicated problems of the epigraphy of ancient Chinese bronzes are admirably discussed by Mr. Yetts in his excellent essay in the first volume of his catalogue of the bronzes in the Eumorfopoulos Collection.

Another curious problem is presented by the linear design cast in very low relief under the bottom of the bowl. As usual, the bottom of the bowl carries out the curve of the silhouette of the sides, so that its underside presents a convex surface. On this round area we find a coiled *k'uei* dragon which bears a close resemblance to some ancient jade shapes. Within the dragon is a device which at first glance resembles a turtle or tortoise. This symbol occurs several times in bronze inscriptions, surmounted by a second symbol of anthropomorphic form, and from its appearance with other ideograms the student is warranted in assuming that it is itself a written character. The older Chinese works interpret it as *sun*, meaning "grandson", and the human form as *tzu*, "son"; so that the combination reads *tzu sun*, "sons and grandsons", a formula among the most common. In his recent dictionary of the script of bronze and stone writings, the *Chin Shih Ta Tzu Tien*, Mr. Wang Jen-shou gives a number of examples of the tortoise-like device, listing them under *sun*. Professor Jung Keng, one of China's foremost contemporary authorities on ancient bronzes, is skeptical of this rendering and leaves the combination of the man and tortoise undeciphered in his *Pao Yun Lou I Ch'i T'u Lu*. Even if the older reading were acceptable, it is difficult to understand why the single word "grandson" should be included within the dragon design on the bottom of this *yu* wholly separate from the inscription.

Another hypothesis that has been offered is that the design is actually a picture of a tortoise, and that it must be named (not read) *kuei*, "tortoise or turtle." It is true that the tortoise figured largely in ancient lore, and especially in divination; and that inscribed carapaces have been recovered from very old sites such as An Yang. It is true that the tortoise came to be regarded in mythology and popular belief as one of the four supernatural creatures, and identified with and symbolic of the north. But in the older jade symbols of the cardinal points of the compass only the west is zoomorphically represented, by the tiger. North, east and south are represented by arbitrary forms having no relation to the tortoise, dragon and bird that appear in later centuries. The tortoise has also assumed a position of almost magical connection with the idea of longevity, and stone tablets are customarily placed on the backs of stone tortoises, presumably to endow them with permanence. But whether this idea is of sufficiently early origin to permit us to read some such meaning into the figure on the Keng Kung Yü is very doubtful. So far as the knowledge of the present writer goes, the tortoise is quite unrepresented in ancient Chinese art. There are jade images of many

animals, of birds, fishes, insects, worms and fabulous creatures, but among them we find or remember no tortoise of undoubted antiquity. The exact similarity of the device to the characters mentioned previously is also against the supposition that this is an artistic representation of a natural form. Its function is more likely to be inscriptional, and for its identification we must wait.

Decorative designs on the bottoms of vessels, while rare, are not unknown, and this one stands out as of exceptional merit artistically.

But all this leaves the vessel itself still undescribed, and it is in its magnificent artistry that its greatest significance lies. In the criticism of any plastic form, whether it be of pottery or bronze, the shape is fundamental. Good decoration will enhance and poor decoration will degrade the artistic quality of a fine form, but the best decoration will not make a complete masterpiece of a poor form. And in searching for a means of defining excellence of form we find a hint in the dualism that pervades the Chinese idea of the world. All creation is subject to and dependent upon the interplay of two forces, Heaven and Earth, male and female, positive and negative, light and dark, and so on. The human body, for instance, is healthy when heat and cold are in proper balance. As long as any pair of forces is in harmonious relationship all is well; let their balance be disturbed and ill results follow. This dualism is omnipresent.

We may define excellence of plastic form also in terms of such an interplay of forces, the relation of the active linear element of the silhouette to the passive solid weight of the mass. When the silhouette and the mass are harmoniously balanced, a good form is had. The overbalancing of the outline by the mass, when the curves of the outline are too weak for the bulk, suggests the primitive—concern with the material at the expense of the imaginative or intellectual. When the outline is too vigorous for the mass, the curves too pronounced, decadence is suggested, the exaltation of the fancy and the loss of contact with reality. Habitual production in any period of well-proportioned forms in which silhouette and mass are harmoniously related betokens a high plane of culture, when men can walk with their eyes on the stars and their feet solidly on the soil.

The Keng Kung Yü is an admirable example of such balance. The upward curve of the bowl is restrained and dignified, and the flare of the rim is generous but not lavish. Downward the base descends almost straight, slanting slightly outward, then after a quick smooth curve it drops vertically to the limit of the foot. The mass is adequate to the eye,



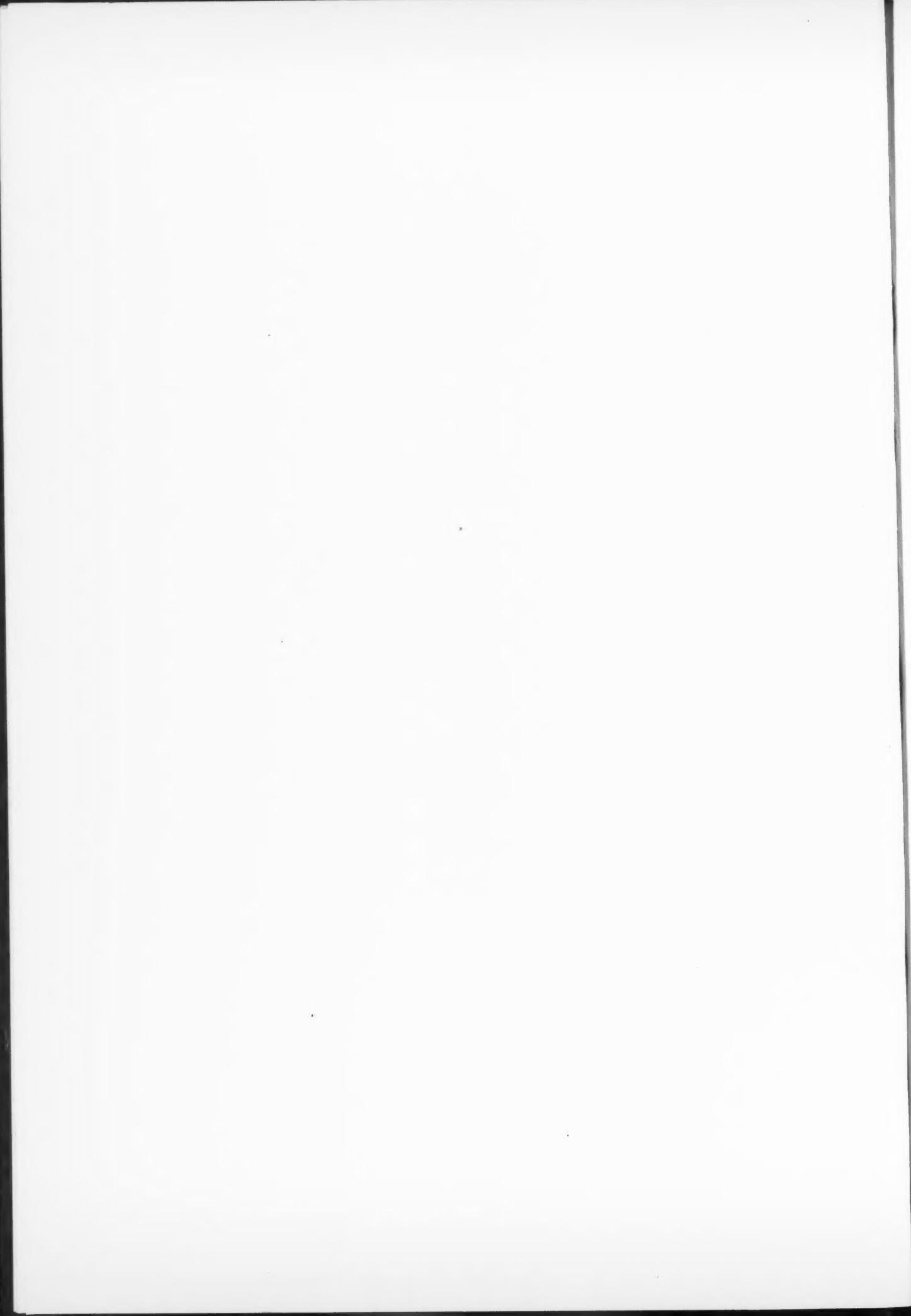
TRACING OF DESIGN CAST IN LOW RELIEF
UNDER THE BOTTOM OF THE BOWL

INSCRIPTION. ORIGINAL AT LEFT,
TRANSCRIPTION IN MODERN CHARACTER AT THE RIGHT

大吉
萬物
皆昌

寶尊等
作庚公





and not over-emphasised. The handles are so affixed and modelled as to give a lifting impression while their solidity prevents their making the whole too light. The entire shape is well conceived to make the vessel an appropriate utensil for the most solemn sacrifices linking material man to the spiritual forces of the world.

The decoration is designed and executed with a thorough understanding of the spirit of the whole piece. It may be described in reference to horizontal zones or to vertical panels. The main body of the bowl, from just above the base to the handles, is ornamented with eight areas in relief against an undecorated ground. Each area is the shape of a spear-head, depending point downward, joining at the top. The design of each is composed of two affronted *k'uei* dragons, against a finely wrought background of meanders. Above each alternate spear-head, at the handles and midway between them, is a broad *t'ao-t'ieh* mask which carries the ascending lines of the lower areas upward and outward. Consequently there are intermediate areas in this upper register, which reaches from the handles to the beginning of the outward flare of the plain rim, which are filled with harmonious stylized forms. This spear-head design is among the oldest of Chinese bronze ornamentations, and it is found in very similar drawing with two dragons and the *t'ao-t'ieh* in some of the An Yang bones. On the base are four horizontally disposed *k'uei* dragons, their tails meeting under the handles, their heads in the middles of the free sides. The background of all the decorated areas is composed of spiral meanders, and the contrast between the plain undecorated surfaces and the sharp clear modelling and prominent relief of the ornament is most effective. The handles are designed with scales like those on the dragon under the bottom.

The outer surface of the vessel is heavily coated with a dry bright green patina, which has in some areas almost replaced the metal. A brilliant lapis color prevails inside the base. The piece is evidently early,—Shang or early Chou,—at least ten centuries before the beginning of the Christian era, and it is both a handsome and an important example of ancient Chinese art.

SOME FRENCH RENAISSANCE PORTRAITS

By EVELYN FOSTER EDWARDS

London, England

Portraiture, for its humanistic interest, as a record of physical likeness, quite apart from its aesthetic appeal, is comparatively free from the exigencies of time and circumstance so far as permanent attraction is concerned.

Therefore, despite frequent mediocrity of pictorial quality and unexciting monotony of execution, these French Renaissance portraits still retain much that is vital and stimulating; especially to anyone possessed of a sympathetic, historic sense. Moreover, neither artist nor spectator of the sixteenth century, was troubled with the comparatively modern "aesthetic" bogey which drives some of the super-realists of to-day to sacrifice the physiognomic character in loyalty to the ideal of abstraction. Photographic verisimilitude, to the sixteenth century artist, was a conscious aim, not an uninspired and uninspiring archaism. If, into the bargain, he achieved expressive plastic design so much the better; but it would not be valued so much by himself or his patrons as the expressive representational qualities of his picture. As yet, unexploited paths in the field of natural imitation afforded scope for enterprise and adventure.

Another point to bear in mind in considering this period, is the absence, as yet, of characteristics which can be called specifically "French".¹ François Ier., with all his zeal, had to content himself with a stucco culture and cultural mise-en-scène, over-laid by foreigners.² It was not till the time of Louis XIV. that the qualities which we recognize as peculiarly "French" in expression and sentiment began to appear as integral and continuous elements in the main stream of the country's art, and even then, atmosphere and milieu rather than race, are the deciding factors. The Clouets, Corneille de Lyon, Rosso, Primaticcio remained (to the second generation in the case of the Clouets)

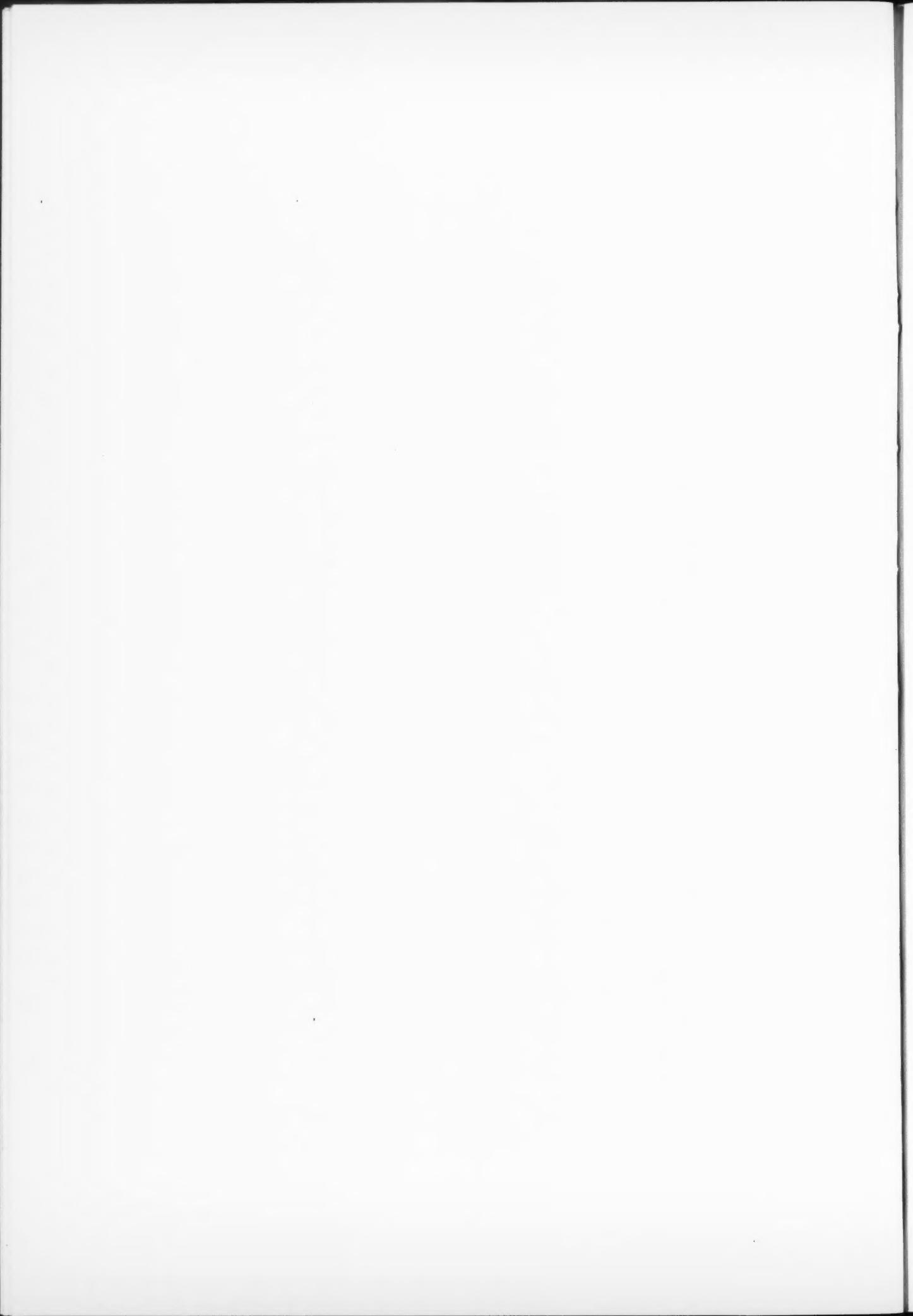
¹ Tracking down the conception and precise constituents of the French genius has been a favourite game of the critics lately; and, although the question has its interests, its importance, from a purely aesthetic point of view, should not be over-emphasised.

² The unsettled political situation in France during these years until the stabilisation of Louis XIV's reign may be considered as a determining factor in the state of the country's artistic life; and have cramped the development of native talent. To take a contrary example, Mr. Clive Bell ("An account of French Painting,") considers that the 19th century French school owed its enormous success to the backing of an increasingly prosperous and aspiring middle-class, in its turn, the product of industrial conditions.



FIG. 1. FRANCIS 1ST
Property of John Harrison

FIG. 2. FRANCIS 1ST
Wallace Collection, National Gallery, London



primarily Flemmings and Italians; whereas—to take modern examples—Monticelli, Modigliani, de Chirico are Frenchified Italians.

From the connoisseur's point of view, a further consideration is that of authorship. Experts are often in entire disagreement and most important attributions are based on hypothetical premises.³ We do not find any considerable group placed indisputably under a definite artist's name, but the majority tend to be vaguely "Clouétique" or "Corneillien" according to the atelier from which they issued and were frequently the work of several hands. Whereas, the expression "d'après le vif", appearing on portraits of the time, applied often to copies from the original drawing, thus confusing the issue still more.

The small portrait of François Ier. here reproduced (Fig. 1.) comes from a private collection in England and is attributed to Clouet fils. Near it, in the present French Art Exhibition at Burlington House, hang two of the three signed works of the master—the "Pierre Quthe", from the Louvre; and the "Dame au Bain",⁴ from Sir Herbert Cook's collection at Richmond. Both of these, however, date from the painter's maturity, some years after the death of the Valois king, and shew the artist leaning towards the Italians, the one re-calling Moroni and the other, possibly influenced by François Clouet's exact contemporary, Primaticcio. Whereas, the portrait in question with its limpid colouring, enamel-like surface and meticulous line reminds us of his affinity with Flanders, and indeed with northern artists of an earlier epoch, notably Jan Van Eyck.⁵ It would appear to date from some years after the battle of Pavia and the Spanish captivity; for, from the numerous drawings of François Ier., it is easy to trace his physiognomic growth and rapid decay under the stress of an arduous life expended in debauchery and the vicissitudes of war and captivity.

The years which divide the debonair, beardless youth of twenty-two (drawing in the Hermitage collection.) from this jaded roué, have left nothing but the elementary structure of the face intact—the cleft chin, the prominent nose, the elliptical eye. But the eye is deadened, the chin bearded, the flesh sagging and lined over the bony structure of the cheek.

³The "François Ier. à cheval," in the Uffizi now variously given to Jean Clouet and Francois, was once attributed to Holbein. The bust of Francois Ier., now in the Louvre by Jean Clouet was formerly given to Mabuse.

⁴At the moment of writing, another portrait of Diane de Poitiers has come to light which experts are inclined to consider anterior and superior to this one at Richmond.

⁵For further evidence of this close northern kinship, compare Janet Clouet's "Elizabeth d'Autriche, wife of Charles IX. painted towards the end of the artist's life in 1571, with, for instance, Mabuse's "Ysabelle d'Autriche (Musée de Bruxelles.)" or his "Margaret Tudor". (National Gallery of Scotland.)

The zenith, from which dates the bust portrait in the Louvre by Jean Clouet,⁶ has been passed.

The drawing of the king in the *Albumn d'Aix*, in which appears François' famous quatrain to Agnes Sorel, gives the clue to his age at this time. From internal evidence, Mr. Moreau-Nelaton⁷ places the date of the Volume 1526—that is, just after François Ier.'s return from Madrid, when he was staying with Catherine d'Honest, wife of Artus de Boisy, and used to amuse himself by scrawling over his hostess' drawings summary accounts—flattering or the reverse as the mood took him—of the subjects portrayed. The Clouet portrait shews the sovereign some years older than this Aix drawing, but younger than that of the Ancient collection Soltykoff. We may consider it, therefore, to represent his appearance during the fifteen-thirties when he would be nearing forty.

Now there appears to be no actual record of either painting or drawing of François Ier. by François Clouet, and the first mention of his name in the archives was in 1547, when he took the dead monarch's features to make an effigy. Moreover, if Mr. Dimier's theory be correct the earliest of the eight authentic oil paintings by the master, dates from 1550 (three years after François Ier.'s death.) and represents Mme. de Bouillon, daughter of Diane de Poitiers. However, despite such rigid elimination, Dimier allows that the young Janet probably had a hand in some of his father's work and also at times, acted as copyist to the older painter and would be responsible for the "mis-en-net" of various works.⁸

On the other hand, there is good evidence to show that François Ier. took the young Janet into his service immediately on the death of the latter's father in 1541, making over to him the rights and remunerations hitherto enjoyed by Jean Clouet; and although the actual date of the young painter's birth, and consequently of his age at this time, is still an open question, it is reasonable to suppose that he had by then, made something of a name for himself.⁹

Taking these facts into consideration and substantiating them by the internal evidence of the painting itself, the balance is in favour of giving the portrait to François Clouet. For the formal qualities of the work, the firm modelling and psychological expressiveness of the features are

⁶P. Andre-Lemoisne places this portrait just before Pavia—le roi "dans toute sa gloire."

⁷Moreau-Nelaton—"Les Clouets et leurs Emules."

⁸Dimier—"L'histoire de la peinture de portrait en France au XVI. siècle."

⁹"Nous ignorons de quel âge était alors François Clouet, mais la haute estime où le tient le roi suggère l'idée d'un homme en pleine possession de ses moyens."—Moreau-Nelaton.

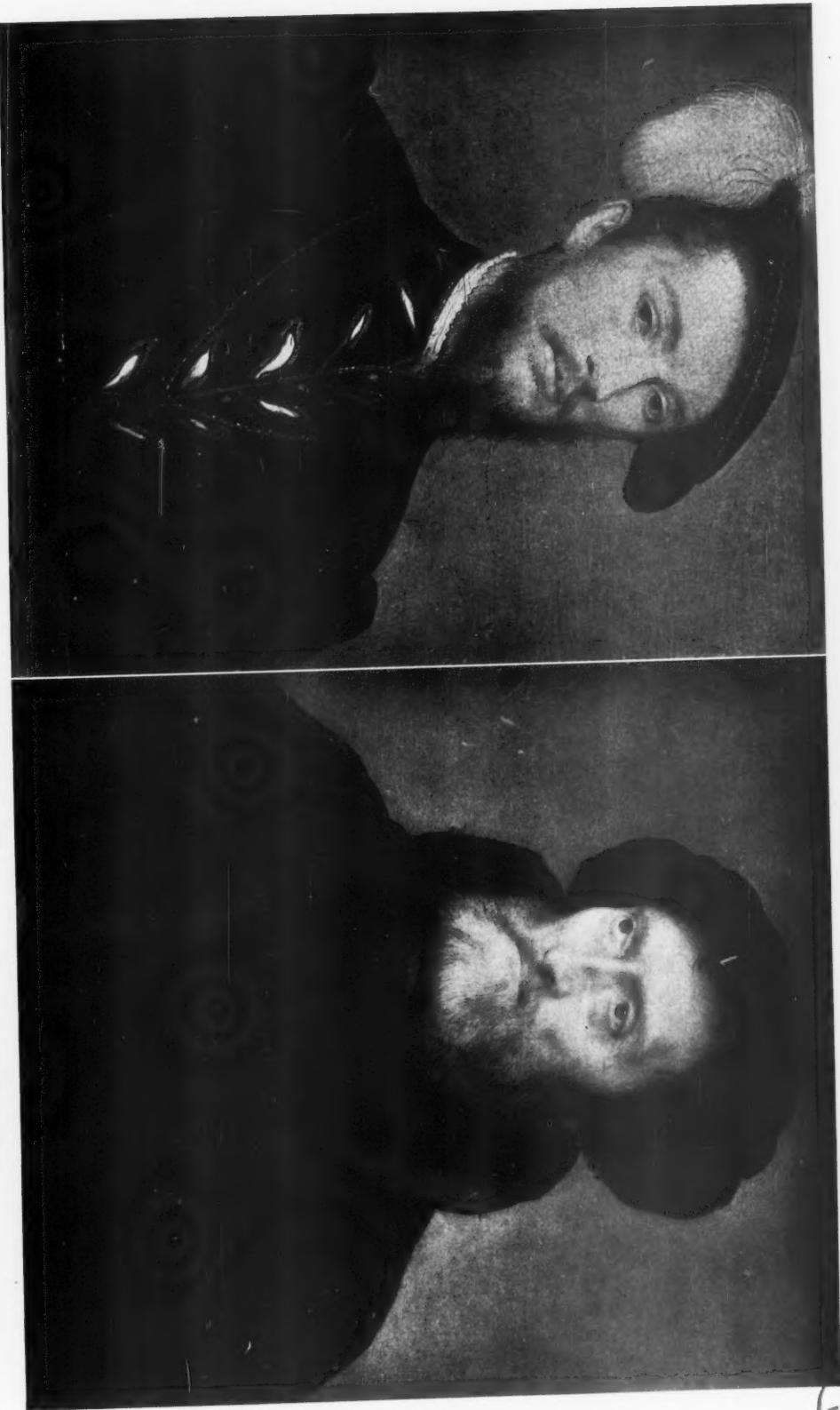
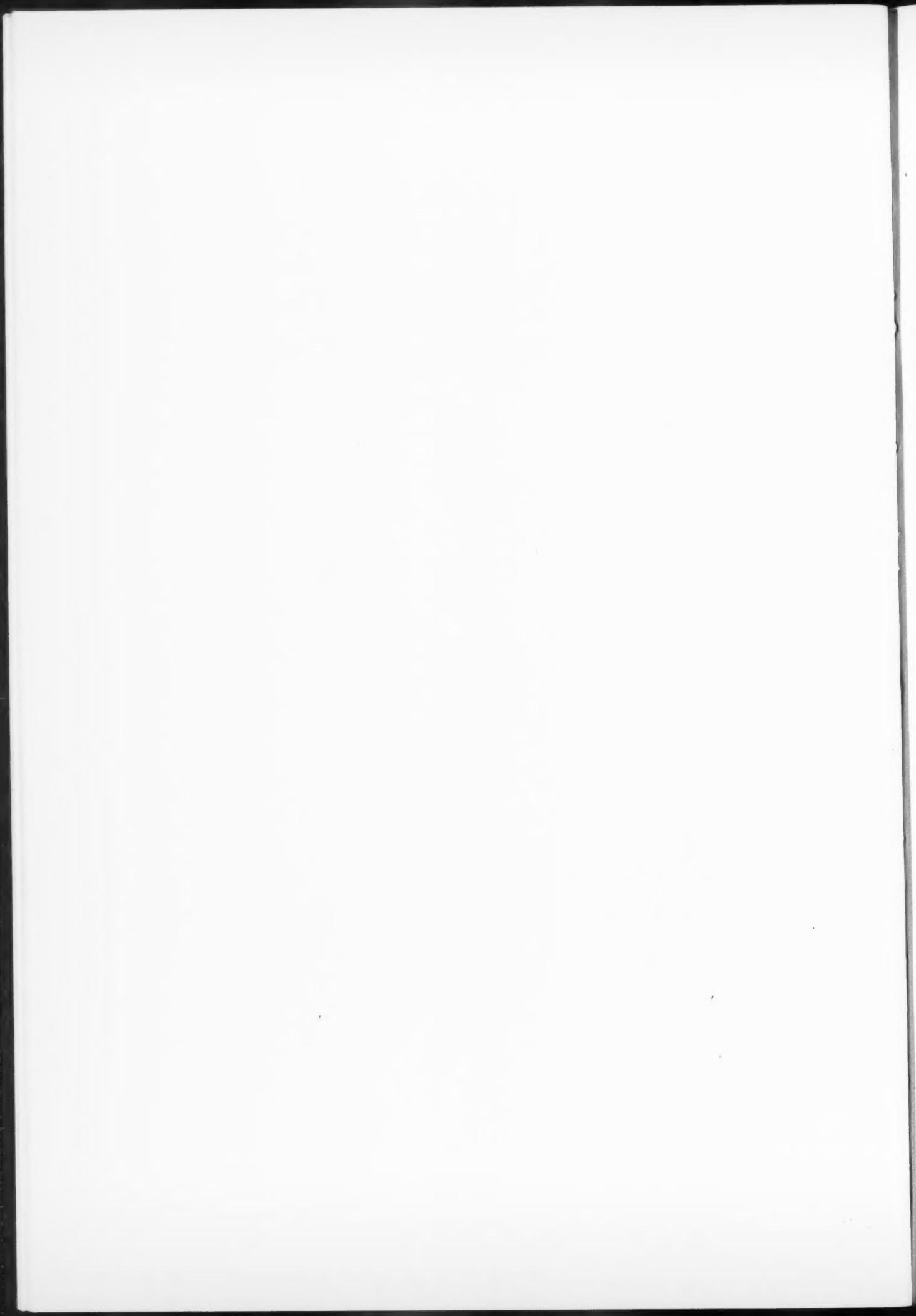


FIG. 3. COMTE DE HERTFORD
Wallace Collection, National Gallery, London

FIG. 4. THEODORE DE BEZE
Property of John Harison



evidence of a master-hand, while the texture of the flesh-painting has its parallel in the Charles IX portrait by François Clouet, belonging to Captain Spencer Churchill, Northwick Park; and also in the famous "Dame au Bain" at Richmond.

Even in reproduction the quality of the work is evident, and may be contrasted with the ineffectual portrait of the king (Fig. 2), at about the same age, and probably copied from the Joos Van Cleef portrait in the John G. Johnson Collection, Philadelphia.

The work associated with the name of Corneille de Lyon appears even more difficult to "fix" and evaluate than that of the Clouets, contemporary popularity being no guarantee of intrinsic quality; while praise and criticism have run the full gamut of possible estimation.

"Pour tirer un personnage au vif,
Cet habile ouvrier est unique,
Il ne possède en France aucun comparatif."

writes Eustorge de Beaulieu; only to be contradicted by Brantôme.¹⁰ In championing the Clouets, he disdainfully mentions Corneille's atelier as "une sorte de fabrique de portraits à la grosse, une espèce de boutique d'éditeur vouée au débit d'une pacotille vulgaire".

Moreover, since the Dutchman's name was dragged from complete obscurity by Laborde¹¹ about the middle of last century, the disparate nature of the work ascribed to him has made many attributions obviously untenable.

It is on account of this that Mr. Dimier¹² has attempted to establish a separate, integral personality—whom he calls for convenience le maître de Rieux-Châteauneuf—as the author of the best portraits of this group, detaching them from association with Corneille's atelier. Among this separate group, he places the portrait (Fig. 3), from the Wallace collection, inscribed "Le comte de Hertford"; a similar portrait in the Louvre for long bearing the fantastic inscription "François Ier., roi de France.", being apparently a copy of the one here illustrated. There seems no reason to doubt that both are authentic likenesses of the Earl of Hertford, brother-in-law of Henry VIII and Lord Protector for a short time during the minority of his nephew, Edward VI. Psychologically, the artist's rendering appears to tally with the traditionally-accepted character of his sitter, as tolerant, intelligent, raffiné, enlightened beyond his age. It is interesting to compare him with his slightly

¹⁰"Oeuvre de Pierre de Bourdeille, Sr. de Brantome, published by L. Lalarme, Paris, 1847.

¹¹Laborde—"La Renaissance des Arts."

¹²Dimier—"L'histoire de la peinture de portrait en France au XIV. siècle."

younger contemporary—François Ier.—the inherent breeding and sensibility of the one; the flamboyant wit, and radical vulgarity and “push” of the other. The François Ier. “legend” needs re-moulding.

But to return au maître de Rieux-Châteauneuf. According to Mr. Dimier then, the portrait from the Wallace Collection takes its place among a group, the key to which is found in the “Inconnu”, Musée d’Avignon, previously attributed to Holbein. Indeed, the kinship between the latter work and certain others by the master of Bâle is striking. In both these so-called Rieux-Châteauneuf, the warmth and depth of colour together with the linear rhythm of the design, point to artistic qualities superior to many others in the Corneille group. On the other hand, allowance must be made for possible discrepancy in the quality of the work issuing from the same studio and for the prevalent custom of resigning parts of a work to apprentices.

If, however, Mr. Dimier’s theory is correct, “elle ouvre” as he points out, “une échappée sur un monde différent de celui où les Clouets nous retiennent, celui d’un art moins borné, moins sec, moins asservi à la pratique dominante du crayon.”

The portrait of Théodore de Bèze, the Calvinist reformer (Fig. 4) follows completely the Corneillien formula both in pose and execution. It was a formula, at once flattering and profitable, making for immediate success among a clientele, whose powers of discrimination would appear limited and whose sensibility (for the object) was blunted by subjective considerations.

Be that as it may, by the year 1541, Corneille had established himself as a sort of Bronzino of the French court, and was carrying on a brisk trade at Lyon, confining himself to court patronage, and never, so far as is known, painting any of his fellow townfolk. He had acquired the trick of turning out a neat likeness, suave and superficially refined. His touch was light and his colour pleasant; but the execution completely monotonous— always the model turned three-quarters view; always the ground a stereotyped green or blue. There is no depth of modelling, or variety of arrangement. They are pictures which please and amuse at times; they do not excite. But, as suggested earlier in this essay, there are other minor values than the ultimate aesthetic one.

MORE NOTES ON PETER PELHAM

By FREDERICK W. COBURN

Lowell, Mass.

Concerning Peter Pelham, limner and mezzotinter, a few data can be given which were unknown to his industrious and accurate biographer, the late William H. Whitmore, whose *Notes concerning Peter Pelham, the earliest Artist resident in New England* is familiar to all students of early American art.

Peter Pelham was not, as stated, the first painter to practise his art in New England. Jeremiah Dummer, Thomas Child and others preceded him. He was not born in 1684, the date almost universally given, for his father, Peter Pelham, sr., in that year was not more than 12 years old. Whitmore corrected the death date, 1737, which appears in several English publications; records of Trinity Church, Boston, establish it as of 1751. Professor Guernsey Jones's discovery, some years ago, of Pelham-Copley correspondence in the Public Record Office, London, made available letters which, published by the Massachusetts Historical Society, disclose facts not theretofore known about the artist's father, his sister Helena Pelham, and himself. George Francis Dow's scrutiny of eighteenth century New England newspapers has revealed items which Whitmore failed to get. Portraits attributable to Pelham have lately come into the news. One of these, that of Governor Samuel Shute, is, possibly, a key picture. It may unlock such mystery as still covers the early part of Peter Pelham's life story.

In "Chats on Old Prints" (1906) Arthur Hayden wrote: "Peter Pelham, who was born in London in 1684 and died in 1738, is another of the early eighteenth century engravers whose work may fall within the reach of collectors." More correctly, in respect of the death date, J. Herbert Slater said in "Engravings and their Value" (1921): "Pelham, Peter. Born in London about the year 1685; died in America, where he had emigrated some years previously, in 1751. This artist was an engraver in mezzotint and executed a number of portraits in that medium." In "Short History of Engraving and Etching" (1911) Arthur M. Hind gave succinctly: "Pelham, Peter, Mezz. London, Boston (Mass.) ab. 1684-1751." These and other English authorities, presumably because Peter Pelham has not poignantly challenged their interest, have been content not to improve greatly on the inaccurate and inadequate ac-

count in Bryan's "Biographical Dictionary of Painters and Engravers" which, in successive editions beginning in 1816, has said: "Pelham, Peter, an English engraver, was born in London in 1684, and died about 1738. He engraved several portraits in mezzotint, among which are the following:

King George I; after Kneller
King George II; after the same
Anne, Consort of the Prince of Orange; after the same
Oliver Cromwell; after Walker
Thomas Holles; Duke of Newcastle
Robert, Viscount Molesworth; after Gibson
John, Lord Carteret; after Kneller
James Gibbs (sic), Architect; after Hysing
Peter Paul Rubens; after Rubens
Edward Cooper; after Van der Vaart
Dr. Edmund, Bishop of London; after Murray.

J. C. Pelham, a painter chiefly of portraits, born in 1721, was his son."

This traditional account presents problems of biographical research which more than sixty years after the publication of Whitmore's monograph are unsolved.

London parish registers do not show Peter Pelham's birth in London. His name, however, and that of his first wife Martha appear in the *Registers of St. Paul, Covent Garden* as follows:

Jan. 20, 1720. Christening of Geo. s of Peter Pelham by Martha his wife

Dec. 17, 1721. Peter son of Peter Pelham by Martha his wife

Dec. 9, 1722. Charles son of Peter Pelham by Martha his wife.

The dates of these entries leave it possible, but improbable, that to this pair a son "J. C. Pelham" was born in 1721, his parents for some reason failing to have his birth recorded in the parish to which they belonged. Nothing has been discovered by this writer concerning J. C. Pelham. Was there such a painter?

The Peter Pelham birth date, 1684, is obviously impossible, though so given in many publications. The "Copley-Pelham Letters" have a letter of the artist's father to his son in Boston in which, under date of July 4, 1741, he speaks of "my near Approach to 70." The senior Pelham, then, must have been born about 1672. He was not a father at age 12 or under! A more plausible dating of the artist's birth would be *circa* 1694 or 1695. This would allow him to have learned his art prior to

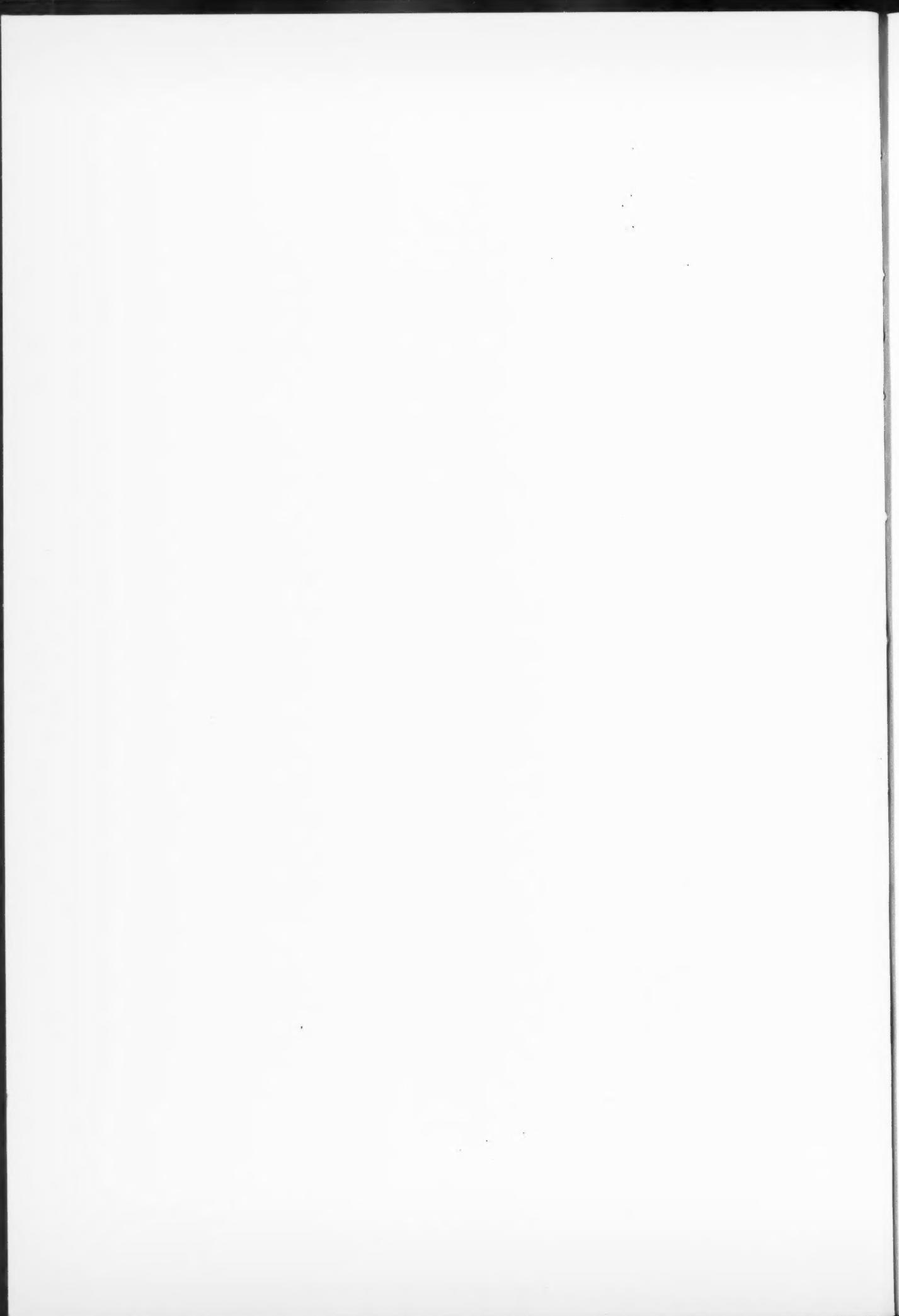


SIR WILLIAM PEPPERELL.
MEZZOTINT BY PETER PELHAM AFTER THE
PORTRAIT BY JOHN SMIBERT, OF 1747
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Mass.



COTTON MATHER.
MEZZOTINT BY PETER PELHAM AFTER THE
PORTRAIT BY HIMSELF
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Mass.





making at the age of about 26 his first important mezzotint, that of Mrs. Centlivre, actress, published by himself "against Cross Lane in Long Acre" in 1720.

Peter Pelham, senior, died in 1756 at Chichester, Sussex, where his daughter Helena survived him. That circumstance may furnish a clue to some future investigator.

The Sussex Pelhams were, and are, a numerous gens, and it was natural to hope, when there appeared in 1929 "Historical and Genealogical Notices of the Pelham Family" by the late M. A. Lower, to find a connection of the emigrant artist with the lines therein collated. The only satisfaction of one's curiosity was in this paragraph: "There are humble persons bearing this distinguished name at Seaford, Rye, Rottingdean and other places in East Sussex. A distinguished rat catcher who lived at Ringmer about sixty years since always claimed the Earl of Chichester as his cousin; 'for,' said he, 'he is a Pelham and I am a Pelham.' The present Earl of Chichester, when appealed to for help in establishing the Peter Pelham genealogy, courteously referred the American inquirer to the Hon. Mrs. Arthur Pelham who wrote that she has been unable to establish any connection between the Peter Pelhams and the better known Pelhams of Lewes and Stanmer.

Miss Mary Pelham Hill, of Topsham, Me., a descendant from Peter Pelham who has given much attention to the Pelham genealogy, believes that she has found a relationship of her Pelhams with the Dukes of Newcastle, who were Holles and Pelham, and one of whom Peter Pelham certainly engraved. From an officer of the Sussex Archaeological society the present writer has had data concerning the Pelhams and Colbrons, much intermarried in the Lewes vicinity, which indicate that members of both families moved across the Thames to Boreham, Essex. This village was in a district whence many Puritans came to New England in the Great Migration. Whitmore, it is recalled, hoped to connect Peter Pelham the emigrant, with the eminent Puritan family of which Herbert Pelham, secretary of New England and early treasurer of Harvard College, was a seventeenth century member. The Pelhams of Newport, R. I., came down from Herbert Pelham through his son Edward. Peter Pelham had Rhode Island contacts and lived at Newport for at least a short time, perhaps among cousins.

A likelihood that Peter Pelham was connected with the Pelhams already settled in New England is increased by circumstances attending the painting, by Pelham, of the portrait of Governor Samuel Shute, recently discovered.

Shute (1653-1742) may have been related to the Herbert Pelhams (v. N. E. Hist. & Gen. Reg. 33, 285-95). It is known that his maternal grandfather, Rev. Joseph Caryl, was a leading Puritan, and that it was Shute's nonconformist background which led in 1716 to his appointment as royal governor of Massachusetts, the British government hoping that he would be more successful than others had been in conciliating the refractory colonials. Shute's failure in this mission is of familiar record. He returned to England in 1723, thence to correspond very interestingly with Rev. Benjamin Colman at Boston (v. letters in the Massachusetts Archives Division, State House, Boston); and there to sit for his portrait to Peter Pelham, perhaps his kinsman. It is probable that Shute hoped to return to Massachusetts (though he never did), and possible that he recommended to Pelham, then a young artist, that he precede him to Boston.

The Shute portrait, at all events, has always been owned in this country, and family tradition, which seemingly must be correct, has it that Pelham brought the canvas with him to serve as introduction to clergymen and others whom he hoped to paint and engrave. The interesting pedigree of the picture bears out this supposition. It was acquired from the artist by Lieutenant Governor Spencer Phips, adopted son of Governor Sir William Phips.

The younger Phips had sided with Shute in his controversies; he was a natural purchaser of the likeness of one under whom he hoped to serve. The painting, to trace it briefly, was inherited by Spencer Phips's grand-daughter, Elizabeth Vassall, who was married to Thomas Oliver. A loyalist, she died in England in 1800. She had previously left the painting with an aunt who remained at Boston, Mrs. Penelope Royall Vassall. The latter gave it to her daughter, Elizabeth, wife of Dr. Charles Russell. It passed thence to their daughter, Mrs. Charles Furlong Degan, whose son, Charles Russell Degan, was for many years in business in New York. Through his grand-daughter, Miss Elizabeth Degan, the picture in the late 1920's became the property of Mrs. Thomas Brattle Gannett, of Boston. It is the best example thus far revealed of Peter Pelham's artistry, and behind it, in all probability, lies the explanation of his renouncing the prospect of a successful career at London to settle in a place where, in order to make a living, he was obliged to teach dancing and arithmetic and "painting on glass."

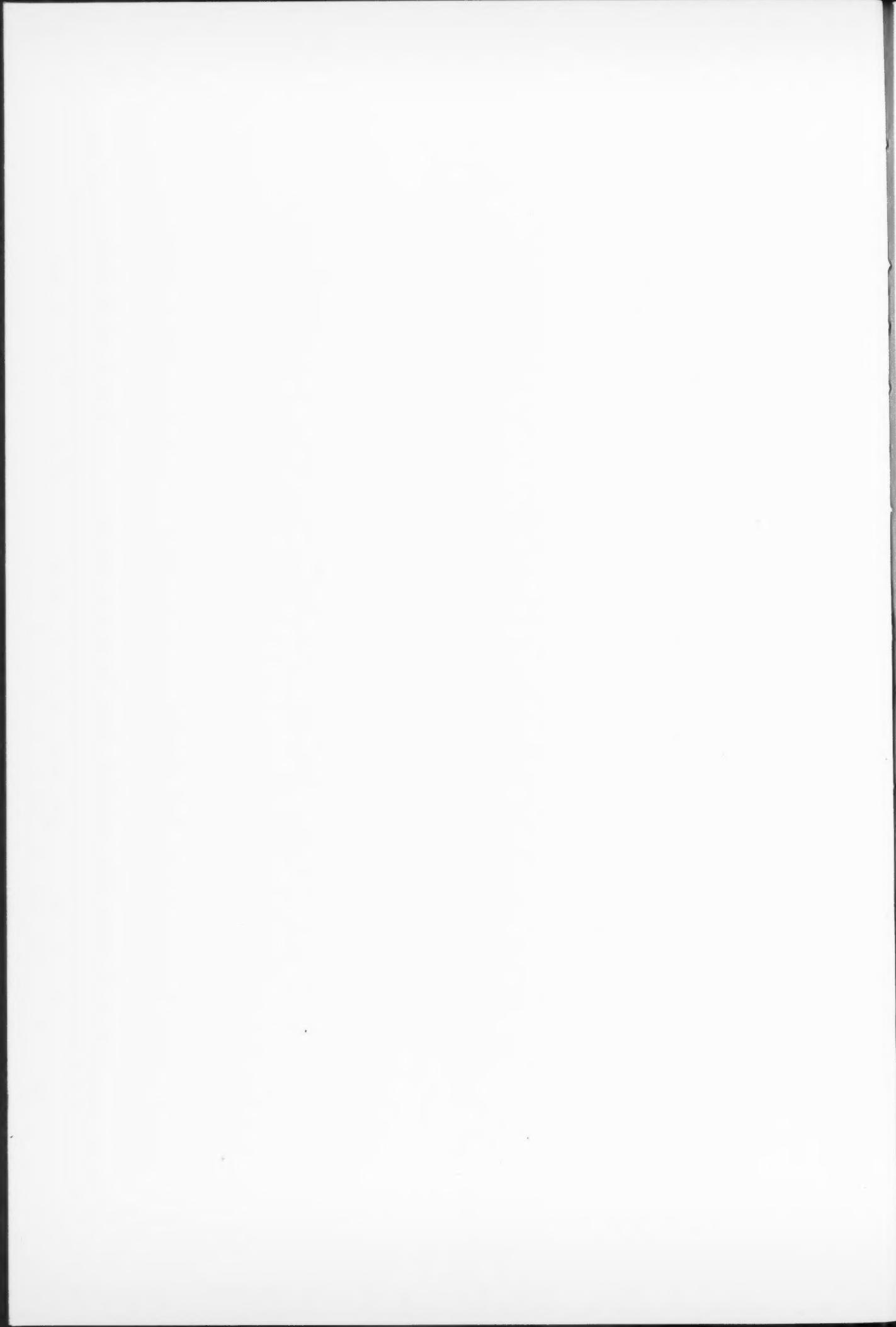
Some indiscretion of Peter Pelham's at London may have made him the readier to accept Governor Shute's assurance of good business at Boston. The first of his father's letters, in the Copley-Pelham cor-



GOVERNOR SAMUEL SHUTE; BY PETER PELHAM
Collection of Mrs. Thomas Brattle Gannett

GOVERNOR WILLIAM GREENE; BY PETER PELHAM
Property of Mrs. Charles Pelham Curtis, Jr.





respondence, is dated Sept. 12, 1739. It clearly followed a letter from the junior which informed his London relatives that he had re-married and that, amidst financial troubles, a child was expected. The father in reply regretted that he could not give aid, though he offered forgiveness for some previous wrong-doing, saying: "But since you make me believe you are sorry for what is Past I Cannot be of that stubborn and unforgiveing Disposition as not to pardon and wipe of all Misdemeanors, and do heartily forgive what Ever has been amiss in you on my account and never for the future I hope shall have any more Cause of Complaint." The letter ends: "And now once more my Dear son since the Ice is Broake Between us, I hope for a great Deale of Pleasure by Renewing our Corispondence and shall heartily Prey God to Bless and Prosper you in all your honest undertaking."

The date of Peter Pelham's arrival in Boston has generally been given as 1726—upon what authority has not been ascertained. It could not have been later than 1727 or 1727/8. In that year, old-style, the artist, newly arrived from London, painted and engraved the well known portraits of Cotton Mather. The Mather painting, now at the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, is technically inferior to the Governor Shute, but it may have suffered under a restorer's hand. The mezzotint, doubtless the first of its kind to be made in North America, is of splendid quality. As Worthington C. Ford says, in his preface to "The Diary of Cotton Mather": "The mezzotint by Peter Pelham, from a portrait painted by him in 1728, is of a higher order of workmanship" than the painting. Ford's dating, incidentally, of the original portrait may be right, even though the engraving, naturally made after the painting, is plainly dated "1727". "Proposals" to sell this mezzotint were advertised in *Boston News Letter*, Feb. 29, 1728-9. In "Broadsides, Ballads etc., Printed in Massachusetts, 1639-1800," published by the Massachusetts Historical Society, is a receipt signed by Peter Pelham, March 1727-28, for a subscription to the Cotton Mather print.

This print, as collectors know, is among the rarities. One was sold in London in the winter of 1929-30 for £ 165.

When not eking out a precarious living as teacher Pelham painted and engraved portraits in the town of Boston which he seems never to have left except for a brief residence at Newport. He soon had as artist neighbor John Smibert, the Scot painter, of whom he made a not very impressive likeness. It, too, like the Cotton Mather, may have been restored.

In a list of fourteen mezzotints engraved by Pelham at Boston six

are after portraits by Smibert; seven after Pelham's own originals. The remaining one, that of Thomas Prince, dated 1750, is after John Greenwood.

When Smibert did a portrait of Rev. Benjamin Colman, Governor Shute's closest friend among Boston ministers, Pelham followed him with an engraving of which Rev. E. Turell wrote in his "Life of Colman" (1747): "His picture, drawn in the year 1737 by the greatest Master our Country has seen, Mr. John Smibert, shows both his Face and Air to perfection; and a very considerable Resemblance is given us in the Mezzotinto done from it by Mr. P. Pelham, which is in many of our Houses." Others of the cloth whom Pelham engraved were: Rev. Charles Brockwell, 1750; Rev. Mather Byles, undated; Rev. Henry Caner, 1750; Rev. William Cooper, 1743; Rev. Timothy Cutler, 1750; Rev. William Hooper, 1750; Rev. John Moorhead, 1751; Rev. Thomas Prince, 1750; Rev. Joseph Sewall, undated.

Two of the most popular of Peter Pelham's layman portraits should have been those of Sir William Pepperell, hero of Louisburg, painted after Smibert in 1747, and the Governor Shirley, also after Smibert, 1747.

While Peter Pelham is known to the art books as an engraver his original portraits entitle him to a high place among Colonial painters.

A notable recent addition to the list of these portraits is that of William Greene (1695-1758), governor of Rhode Island for eleven years. This work, owned (1932) by Mrs. Charles Pelham Curtis, jr., may have some bearing upon Whitmore's theory that Peter Pelham was a cousin of the Newport Pelhams. The portrait seemingly could have been painted in Rhode Island where Peter Pelham's son Thomas, by his second wife, was born. Wherever made, it is an admirable work of art.

A. T. Perkins says (in *Mass. Hist. Proceedings*, 12, 320): "The household of Peter Pelham was perhaps (about 1750) the only place in New England where painting and engraving were the predominant pursuits." A phrase "preferred pursuits" would doubtless be truer to the facts. It is significant that 10085, *Suffolk County Probate Records*, concerning disposition of Peter Pelham's estate, names him only as "school master." His Lindall street house, at the present corner of Exchange Place and Congress street, could not have been a home of opulence. Several letters of his English relative clearly relate to letters of his in which he had described his financial worries.

His was, nevertheless, a home of the arts of civilization. "The first public concert in America of which we have record," writes John Tasker Howard (in "The Music of George Washington's Time"), "was

held in Boston. This was in 1731, at a time when the New England ban against secular music was gradually being lowered. The affair, "a Concert of Music on sundry Instruments" was held in 'the great room' at Mr. Pelham's, an engraver, dancing master, instructor in reading and writing, painting upon glass, and a dealer in the 'best Virginia tobacco.' " A dancing school was advertised by Mr. Pelham, Nov. 23, 1732. The musical and terpsichorean activities at his house are very amusingly censured in a communication to the editor of the *Boston Gazette*, which Whitmore seems not to have discovered but which is printed in full by Mr. Dow in "Arts and Crafts in New England."

Thus engaged in corrupting the morals, and increasing the extravagance of the community, Peter Pelham lived during about twenty years in Boston his industrious, useful life. He must have attended to the fundamental decencies. He was granted permission in November, 1742 (*Boston Record Commissioners' Report*, XV, 367) "to dig up the Pavement & to open the Ground in Lovells Lane in Order to repair the Drain running from the House wherein he Dwells into the Common Shore (sewer)." He communicated at Trinity Church. To his profession of school master he brought up at least one of his sons, Charles Pelham, who married Mary Tyler, niece of Sir William Pepperell, and who successfully taught school at Medford and elsewhere. His second wife, Margaret Lowrey, having died, he married in 1748 Mary Singleton Copley, Irish widow of Richard Copley, an Irish tobacconist who had come to Boston about 1736. The new wife brought to Peter Pelham's home her wares and her talented son John Singleton Copley. She advertised (*Boston Evening Post*, July 11, 1748: "Mrs. Mary Pelham (formerly the Widow Copley on the Long Wharf, Tobacconist), is remov'd into Lindel's Row, against the Quakers' Meeting House, near the upper End of King Street, Boston." This marriage to a most estimable woman pleased Peter Pelham's father for, writing under date of Nov. 30, 1749, from an "aboade which is at one Mr. Compton's a grocer in South Audley Street Grocevenor Square," the senior commented: "I am Extreamely well Pleasd that god has blest you with so Choice a Companion, which is the greatest Pleasure and Comfort of Life."

The portrait of Peter Pelham with his engraving tools under his right hand, made by his stepson, Copley, after his death, may well reveal his appearance in the last years of his life. It presents a man of, apparently, about fifty years, whereas, if the generally accepted birth date of 1684 were correct, his age at death must have been sixty-seven or sixty-eight years.

This evidence of the painting is not, *per se*, entirely conclusive. The likeness, conceivably, could have been made from a sketch of Pelham of an earlier period. Whitmore, who knew the work, says: "As it represents a man younger than Pelham was at his death I incline to the belief that Copley designed the figure and accessories and copied the face from another portrait." This supposition was offered, of course, on the theory that the date of Pelham's birth in the books is right. As, however, we have already seen it must be wrong, and that certainty makes it probable that in 1753, when he signed and dated this work, Copley, wishing to please his mother with a portrait of the artist lately deceased, used his own boyish sketches as copy for the canvas, long preserved among the descendants of Charles Pelham, of Newton, and now in the ownership of Charles Pelham Curtis, of Boston.

Peter Pelham was buried from Trinity Church, Boston, Dec. 14, 1751. Although Harvard College in the preceding May, in granting him permission to make a mezzotint of Joseph Highmore's portrait of Thomas Hollis, had named him "Mr. Pelham, of Boston, Painter," he is thus described at Suffolk County Courthouse: "Schoolmaster, decsd, having while he Lived, and at the time of his Decease, Goods, Chattels, Rights or Credits in the County aforesaid lately died Intestate." Administration was granted to his widow June 23, 1752. She lived to enjoy great comfort through the family prosperity brought about by her son Copley's success. She died May 4, 1789. Peter Pelham, sr., outlived his artist son, dying at Chichester July 2, 1756. His letters and those of his daughter Helena pictorialize vividly the social background from which Peter Pelham, the artist, emigrated.





A CHINESE IMAGE IN THE
SUNG TRADITION

Property of Mr. Mortimer C. Leventritt,
Florence, Italy



A CHINESE IMAGE IN THE SUNG TRADITION

By BERTHA K. STRAIGHT

Urbana, Illinois

A Chinese polychromed wooden image in the collection of Mr. Mortimer Leventritt in Florence presents a type and probable example of the work of the Sung dynasty. The best sculptural work of Sung, as far as known, was done in wood, and almost always coloured, but, unfortunately, few surviving specimens are dated. Although documents are lacking both for date and provenance of Mr. Leventritt's statue, Sung quality is felt in its general character as in the disposition of particular details. The image is toned by time but excellently preserved.

The figure, forty-six inches in height, erect on a lotus base, wears a kind of peploned garment, narrowed at the waist, and extending in natural folds to the feet. Both feet carry the weight, and there is only a hint of the swaying body movement common alike in frescoed and carved work of various periods. A scarf, worn cape-wise around the shoulders, falls down on either side from the arms, and over the edge of the pedestal, thus lengthening the line of the figure. On the head rests a rich tiara or diadem which conceals from the front the high mitre-like coiffure; escaping locks fall on each shoulder; and across the forehead lies a band of schematised hair. The left hand is raised in a typical Buddhist gesture, two fingers pointing upward, the others holding the usual chain of beads. The right hand grasps the leaf-shaped emblem observed in the hands of Bodhisattvas from the times of Wei. Traces of mellowed colour show as faintly red on the shoulders, yellow on the breast, blue in the folds, and here and there glimpses of green.

With the study of Chinese art still in a pioneer stage, one can only offer tentative suggestions by way of attribution. Fashions lingered on from one dynasty to another, or were consciously revived, and Sung had its archaic moods. In this statue, to mention a detail, the curve of the eyelid follows a T'ang convention. The aloofness and unemotional dignity, while reminiscent of earlier sculpture, are wholly compatible with Sung character; these qualities in fact constitute an almost constant element in Chinese art. The ease of the drapery, however, the form of garment and arrangement of scarf, the special scheme of the hair and type of diadem, contour and pose, finally the pervading spirit of the figure and its arresting realism, all these reveal definitely the Sung mode and place the image in the Sung tradition. The sex, perhaps, may

contribute some slight indication of date. The earliest Bodhisattvas were supposedly male divinities, but on the whole a Chinese deity was a rather neutral being until during Sung, especially Southern Sung, a Kuanyin evolved which was more patently feminine in effect. Mr. Leventritt's statue, without masculine attributes, appears in spirit as the feminine Kuanyin, Goddess of Mercy. The pose, taut without stiffness, and the almost cold nobility of the face, gentle to be sure but without sentimentality, would set it with Northern rather than with Southern Sung figures, for the latter are wont to take an easier, looser, more informal posture, and to show a weaker, softer type of face. Confirmatory of a Northern Sung attribution it might be noted that the eyebrows do not meet in the middle above the nose to form an unbroken line which has been cited as a usual mark of Southern Sung style. (*) If our Kuanyin is accepted as a feminine manifestation, it offers, in a way, arguments for both a Northern and for a Southern Sung derivation, for Northern on stylistic grounds, for Southern Sung on its definitely feminine character. Logically, therefore, one is tempted to give the image to the transitional years in the twelfth century which lay between the two regimes. But if Sung assimilated earlier work, post-Sung epochs did the same, and one cannot dogmatize from tempting evidence.

Whatever the attribution, the figure is from all sides vividly felt, a figure set in space, three-dimensional, as if to be seen from any angle, not flattened against a wall. This impression of actuality makes one almost neglect for the moment the rhythmic composition of the statue. The elaborate note of the design is the richly fashioned tiara which gives importance to the head, contrasting with the smooth and not too much modelled planes of the face and with the simple divisions of drapery below. The scarf, falling straight from arms to base, acts as boundary line to the design, and effects a compactness of composition and a closed contour which the Chinese sculptor loved. Regarded as design, the figure exists as a unit not more by the coherence and symmetry of its main parts than by the rhythmical disposal and by the rigorous economy of its ornament.

The satisfaction experienced in the design of a Chinese statue never leaves the observer unconscious of its animating spirit. To the Chinese artist purely visual values bear close relationship to inner substance, and in the example before us, form and spirit are inseparable complements. Reticence, balance, rhythm of form find response in a mysterious, poised, and gracious personality.

(*) Leigh Ashton, *Introduction to the Study of Chinese Sculpture*, p. 99.

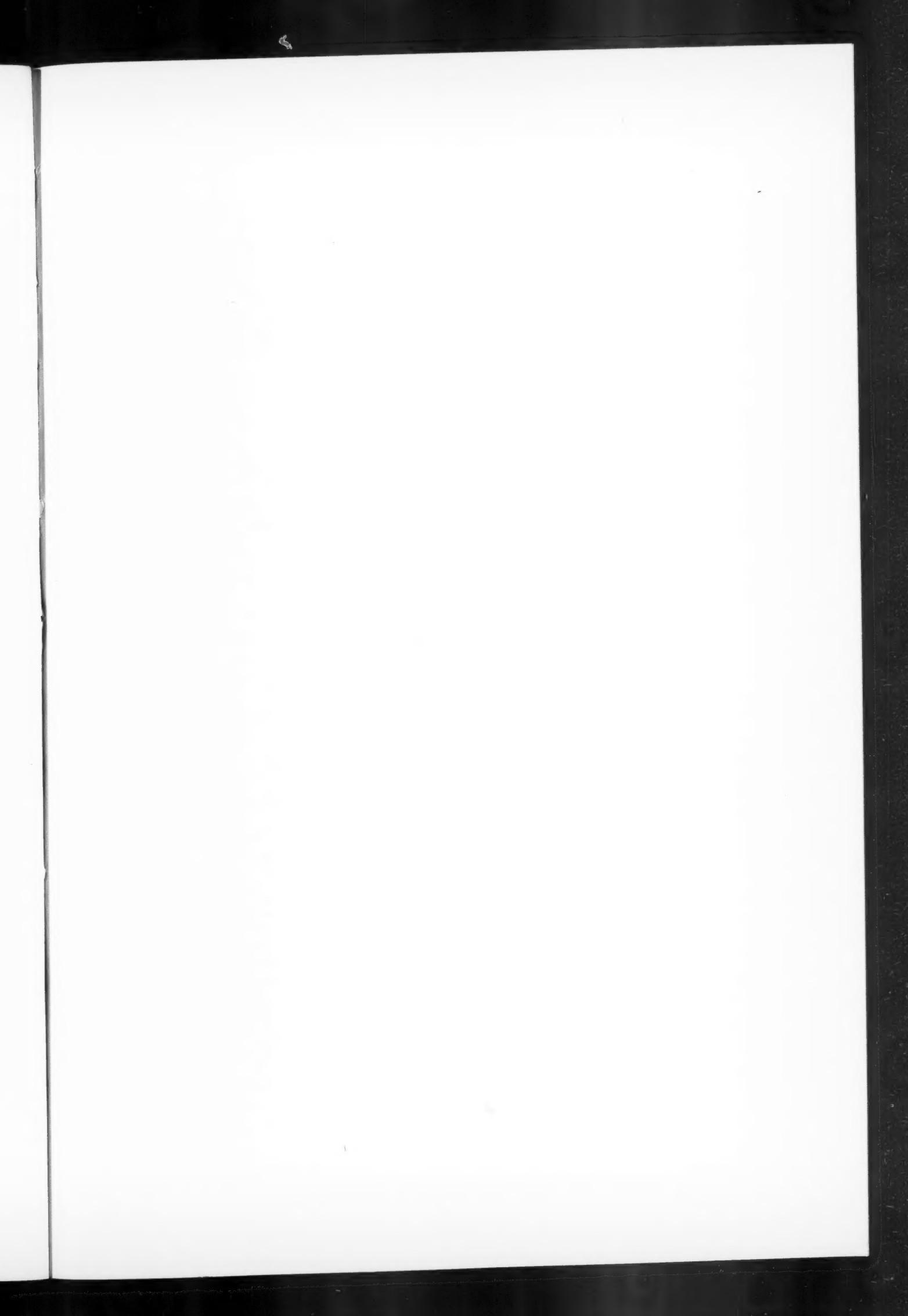




FIG. 1. NORTH AFRICAN DAGGER
XVI CENTURY
A. S. Dry Galleries, N. Y.
Private Collection, Detroit, Mich.



FIG. 2. BLADE MARK OF DAGGER (FIG. 1)

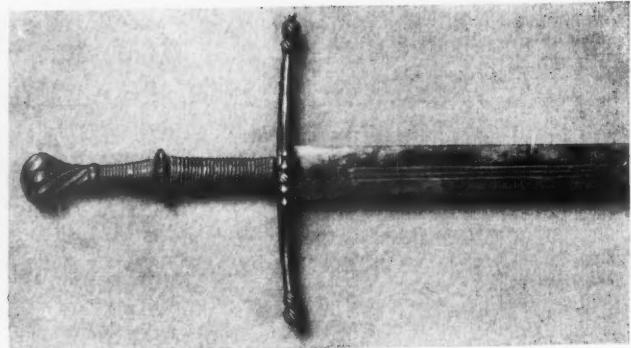


FIG. 3. GERMAN SWORD, EARLY XVI CENTURY
A. S. Dry Galleries, N. Y.

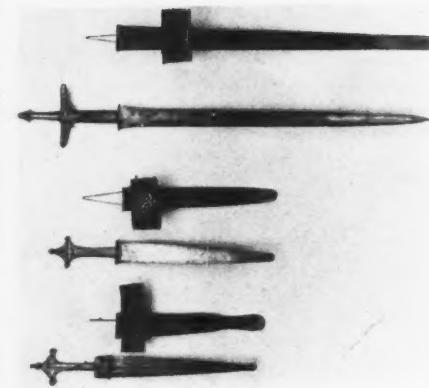


FIG. 4. TUAREG DAGGER
Collection of Count Hoyos, Austria



FIG. 5. TUAREG SWORD AND DAGGERS
Private Collection, Germany

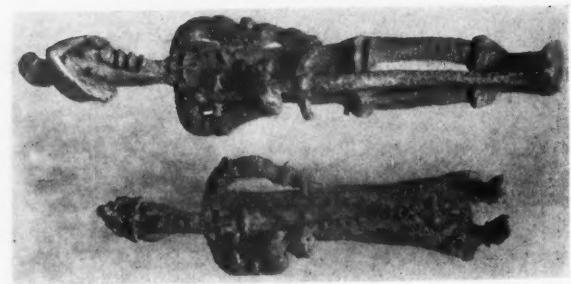


FIG. 6. CARVED LEAD FIGURES
Gold Coast of Benin
Private Collection, Germany

A CURIOUS FIND ON AMERICAN SOIL.

By HANS STÖCKLEIN

In the summer of 1930 a farmer in Utica, in the vicinity of Detroit, Michigan, while digging in a field that had long lain fallow, unearthed a dagger about two or three feet below the surface. The weapon was later acquired by a Detroit collector.

When I first received a photograph of the dagger, I was unable to place it for a long time, since it could not be pre-Columbian as bronze and iron were metals unknown to the Indians; nor could any relation be established to any Spanish or other European types of arms in use after the discovery of America. A fleeting thought of connecting it with the alleged visit of the Vikings, which, although supported by literary records, has as yet not been substantiated by actual vestiges, had to be discarded quickly inasmuch as the weapon did not tally in form and ornament with any swords found in places visited by the Vikings. It was only when the dagger itself was sent to me in Munich that I was able to solve the problem.

The dagger (Fig. 1.) consists of a bronze hilt, with copper rivets $5\frac{3}{4}$ inches long, and an iron blade, $11\frac{1}{4}$ inches long, much corroded by the long stay underground. The hilt is ornamented with a geometric pattern of double lines and punched-in circles. An examination of the original only showed a mark (Fig. 2.) on the blade consisting of a longer and two shorter blood grooves, beneath each of which a crescent is punched in.¹

This mark of the three blood grooves, most often with two crescents facing outwards, is originally a German blade mark which can be found on numerous swords from the beginning of the sixteenth century. In the German sword reproduced here (Fig. 3.) from the early sixteenth century the three blood grooves and the two crescents are clearly visible. With the establishing of the mark, the further path to a definite placing was clear. This mark apparently became familiar with the dispersal of swords during the war events of the sixteenth century even in territories beyond the borders of Europe where it was imitated because mystical and talismanic significance was attributed to it. Thus we find the mark of the two crescents and the blood grooves on Caucasian sabres, on a

¹In order to bring out the mark more clearly in the reproduction, it was filled out with white before the photograph was taken.

Turkish sabre of the seventeenth century in the Karlsruhe Museum, on East Indian swords (farangs) in the collection of armor in the Royal Castle, Sandringham, and, finally, on swords of the Mandingo on the African gold coast and the Tuaregs in North Africa.

A dagger in the possession of Count Hoyos, formerly Austrian Ambassador to Morocco (Fig. 4.) has the same curious cross-shaped hilt, while the pattern of the double lines and circles on the scabbard corresponds exactly to the pattern on the hilt of the Detroit dagger. The sword here reproduced (Fig. 5.), as well as the two daggers, come from the tribe of the warlike Tuaregs who inhabit the northern Sudan. The ring-shaped parts of the sheaths are slipped over the forearm so that the dagger is fastened to the outside of the arm, with the hilt resting upon the back of the hand.

The establishing of the dagger's origin also helped in placing a group of strange figures crudely carved in lead which we find in several collections. The figures of a bishop and a king here reproduced (Fig. 6.) are in the possession of art dealers, that of a warrior is in my own collection. This warrior holds a sword, the cross-shaped hilt of which likewise belongs to the group of daggers mentioned above. These lead figures are evidently the work of negroes from the gold coast of Africa or perhaps from Benin and have been designed under the influence of European-Christian representations known through engravings which were brought over by missionaries. A series of exceedingly interesting negro works, with Christian motives, some of them of very high artistic quality, were shown this year in an exhibition of negro sculpture in the Museum of Ethnology in Munich.

There remains only this problem: how did the Detroit dagger come to America? Technique and shape of the hilt indicate its early origin; it may even date from the sixteenth century. At that very time there began the importation into America of African slaves, sanctioned by the Spanish government. Thus the dagger may either have come to America hidden in the garments of a negro from the gold coast or been brought over from Africa by a sailor on a slave ship. What happened to it afterwards can only be left to conjecture. Of the numerous possibilities of its wandering as far as Michigan the most likely is that it had come into the hands of Indians and was buried with one of them.

